

## **Benefits of Mentoring**

### **Professional Development**

Many faculty are looking for help learning how to manage time, resolve conflicts, administer projects, teach efficiently and well, supervise students, and make strategic decisions about service commitments. Well-chosen mentors can assist in these areas, and provide support for the following:

#### **1) Emotional Support**

During transitions, you may experience significant identity and role transitions -- from graduate student (or post-doc) to professor. As a result, you may need support in dealing with the common stress and pressures of academic life.

#### **2) A Sense Of Community**

You may find yourself seeking both an intellectual and/or social community where you feel a true sense of belonging. Community is obviously more challenging to cultivate given that we are in a pandemic.

#### **3) Accountability**

The structure of your job likely provides the least accountability for the activity that is most valued -- research, writing, and publication. In order to avoid getting caught up in the daily chaos, the vast majority of faculty need some form of an accountability system for scholarly writing.

#### **4) Institutional Sponsorship**

You also need to cultivate relationships with people who are invested in your success at your institution. By that, we mean senior faculty who are willing to use their power to advocate for your best interests behind closed doors.

#### **5) Access to Networks**

Because knowledge isn't produced in isolation, it's critical for you to connect with others to discuss potential research collaborations, navigate external funding, and access opportunity structures that might not be immediately apparent.

#### **6) Project Specific Feedback**

You will also need to regularly communicate with people who can provide substantive comments on your proposals, manuscript drafts, and new ideas.

## 7) Role Models

Looking to other faculty members who are navigating the academy in a way that you aspire to will be critical for your development as both a faculty member and academic.

## 8) Safe Space

At any career stage, it's important to have the space to discuss and process special and individual experiences without being invalidated, questioned, devalued and/or disrespected.

And it's impossible to have all these needs met by one person in your department. When faculty members start identifying their needs, asking for the specific types of assistance that will meet those needs, and pro-actively cultivating an ever-expanding network of information, support, contacts, referrals, and advisors that are both internal and external to their campus, **they become more productive.**

In other words, when you shift from a person-based to a needs-based framework, it frees you from the search for "a mentor" and focuses you instead on identifying your needs and getting them met. This shift acknowledges that it's normal to have an evolving set of needs throughout your career and that those needs are most effectively, efficiently, and comprehensively met in the context of a broad network of information, community, support, accountability, and ongoing feedback.

Source: Adapted **From:** The NCFDD Team <[MondayMotivator@FacultyDiversity.org](mailto:MondayMotivator@FacultyDiversity.org)>

**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 10:05 AM